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le figlie dei ποιηταί, che sono  
anno alla τέχνη μουσική. Avendo  
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it., p. 364, l. 16 e segg.).

ΤΝΝΟΟΥ Μ|ΜΟΥ ΜΠΖΔΓΙΟC  
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verso il ἅγιος Leonzio, attoniti,  
e che nel Santo Giorno rivela i  
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Di modo che anch'io dirò κατὰ  
ΧΑΡΙΖΕ] nei confronti di coloro  
(per il fatto che) i venti soffiando  
vano a scontrarsi gli uni con gli  
5 che ruota su se stesso, procu-

Delio Vania Proverbio  
Via delle Cave 27  
00181 Roma

# THE LIFE OF MAXIMUS AND DOMITIUS: THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE WADI AL-NATRUN IN THE X CENTURY

The titles of texts found in Coptic manuscripts have received so far little attention. It is well known that the information they give is suspect; some scholars wrongly consider them as part of the work, but in general the problem of where they come from has been neglected. In the Coptic manuscript tradition two versions of the "Life of Maximus and Domitius"<sup>1</sup> are known, transmitted in Sahidic<sup>2</sup> and in Bohairic<sup>3</sup> respectively. The two versions do not greatly differ, but the Sahidic one deserves special attention. The parchment codex that contains its text was found in Hamuli<sup>4</sup> and is dated from IX-X century.<sup>5</sup> Most of the codex is preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library (M584), but twenty-eight pages are divided between Cairo,

<sup>1</sup> According to the classification of the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (<http://rmcisadu.let.uniroma1.it/~cmcl>) the *Life of Maximus and Domitius* corresponds to the *clavis coptica* 0323.

<sup>2</sup> The Sahidic version of the *Life* is contained in the incomplete manuscript published by H. Munier, *Une relation copte saïdique de la vie des Saints Maxime et Domèce*, in *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 13 (1916), pp. 93-140 as well as in ms M584 of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

<sup>3</sup> The Bohairic version of the *Life* is contained in E. Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse-Égypte*, Paris 1894, pp. 262-315.

<sup>4</sup> In the surroundings of the modern village of Hamuli, in the Fayum oasis, are to be found the remains of the monastery of St. Michael which, in 1910, brought to light a quantity of Coptic codices, most of which were purchased one year later by Pierpont Morgan, representing one of the most important nuclei of this collection.

<sup>5</sup> L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Leuven 1993), p. 332 dates the manuscripts between the 822/23 and the 913/914, respectively the most ancient and the most recent datations found in the colophons of the manuscripts from Hamuli.

Strasbourg and Port Saïd.<sup>6</sup> Besides the "Life of Maximus and Domitius", M584 contains the "Martyrdom of SS. Theodore the Anatolian (the Oriental), Leontius the Arab and Panegirus the Persian".

An important aspect of the Sahidic *Life* is represented by the exceptional length of its title, certainly of a later date than the creation of the text itself. The length of the title would be enough to justify a detailed analysis, but there is a further peculiarity: the unusual attention paid to the description of a very specific Egyptian *milieu*.

A careful analysis of the content of the Sahidic title may be of a great help in reconstructing the cultural life of the last phase of Egyptian literary production in the Coptic language, if we take into account the parallel archaeological evidence.

So far we have incomplete and scant knowledge of the centres (monastic and not) which were still active during the X-XI century. It is probable that they did not produce any more original works in the Coptic language, but they copied and transmitted those previously created texts which still had a certain interest, above all because they were used for liturgical purposes.<sup>7</sup>

In order to make the analysis of the title very clear, it is useful to enumerate the many elements of interest provided by the title in question, according to the following points:

1. length of the title
2. terminology used to define the "literary genre"
3. description of the content of the work
4. questions about the identification of the author
5. comparison with the title preserved in the Bohairic version
6. relationship between the content of the title and the content of the work

To the information supplied by the title is to be added the pre-

<sup>6</sup> For the collocation of the missing *folii* of M584 now in Strasbourg, Cairo and Port Saïd see Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 333.

<sup>7</sup> H. U. Evelyn-White is one of the few scholars to touch upon functions and characteristics of the *scriptoria*, but he does not say anything specific about which *scriptoria* were still active in the last phase of the Coptic literature. See H. U. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn I: New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*, New York 1926, pp. XXI-XXII. *Scriptorium* in A. S. Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* VIII, New York 1991, p. 2108 on the other hand gives information about the sites which, according to the colophons, turn out to have hosted writing laboratories.

cious information directly of which it is attributed, which

7. a comparison between which contain the "Life" tradition of the *Synaxarion* of two saints.

Before discussing the "subject" of the entire text, followed by the title, to have a complete view.

The Sahidic version:<sup>8</sup>

"Subject" (ΤΖΥΠΟΘΕCIC) of Maximus and Domitius, sons of Y... completed a good life full of... the commands of the gosp... month of Tobe, the other c... counted by Apa Pshoi of Co... with Apa Makarios, a man... deacon. Apa Mose the Ethi... wrote the life of the sa... ΝΧΑΡΤΗC). He left it in the... all readers, of a beautiful v... with virtue, for he met with... alive when he came to Sceti... Mastikoi, Apa Isidorus took... He spoke about the life of... them. It then remained the... holy archbishop of Alexand... named Eustatios, who had... parchment books written in... ΝΑΠΑC Ε4CH2 Ε2ΕΝΤΕ... he was looking among book... (Ε4ΜΟΥΩΤ 2Ν ΝΧΩΜΕ... for he was a servant of God... ton, who was from Scetis, an... the life of those perfect sain... our Lord Jesus Christ. In Co...

The Bohairic version:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The translation is based on... *Catalogue*, p. 333.

<sup>9</sup> The translation is based on...



the "Life of Maximus and Domitius" of SS. Theodore the Anabaptist and Panegirus the Persian". *Life* is represented by the existence of a later date than the creation of the title would be enough to justify its peculiarity: the unusual specificity of the Egyptian milieu. The Sahidic title may be of a later date than the last phase of the Coptic language, if we take into account the evidence.

Our knowledge of the centres of Coptic literature during the X-XI century. There are any more original works in this period and transmitted those previously. Their interest, above all because of the evidence.

The title is very clear, it is useful to rest provided by the title in its contents:

terary genre"

work

of the author

found in the Bohairic version

of the title and the

The title is to be added the pre-

of M584 now in Strasbourg, Cairo 1933.

scholars to touch upon functions. It does not say anything specific about the last phase of the Coptic literature of the Wadi 'n Natrûn I: *New Coptic Literature* New York 1926, pp. XXI-XXII. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* VIII, New York 1991, p. 2108. The sites which, according to the laboratories.

cious information directly obtainable from the version of the *Life* to which it is attributed, which suggests:

7. a comparison between the content of the two Coptic texts which contain the "Life of Maximus and Domitius" and the tradition of the *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* concerning the two saints.

Before discussing the "stratigraphic" analysis of the title, we give the entire text, followed by the one with the Bohairic title, in order to have a complete view.

The Sahidic version:<sup>8</sup>

"Subject" (ΤΖΥΠΟΘΕCIC) of the life of the Roman saints Maximus and Domitius, sons of Valentinus, emperor of the Romans, who completed a good life full of all virtues and who also fulfilled in it all the commands of the gospels. The one died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tobe, the other on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the same month. It was recounted by Apa Pshoi of Constantinople, the first deacon who lived with Apa Makarios, a man of God, and Apa Isidorus. He died as a deacon. Apa Mose the Ethiopian was appointed in his place. Pshoi wrote the life of the saints on a papyrus scroll (ΕΥΔΟΜΟC ΝΧΑΡΤΗC). He left it in the church as a benefit and a memorial, for all readers, of a beautiful way of life in accordance with God and with virtue, for he met with them for some days while they were still alive when he came to Scetis. When Scetis has been laid waste by the Mastikoi, Apa Isidorus took it with him to Alexandria to the Xenon. He spoke about the life of those saints and about his great zeal for them. It then remained there until the time of Apa Khrael, the most holy archbishop of Alexandria. It was brought to light by a deacon named Eustatios, who had found it in a large storage box of old parchment books written in quires (ΖΝ ΟΥΝΟC ΝΗΚΗ ΝΧΩΜΕ ΝΑΠΑC ΕΥΧΗC ΕΞΕΝΤΕΤΡΑC ΝΧΩΜΕ ΜΜΕΜΒΡΑΝΟΝ), when he was looking among books that might have deteriorated over time (ΕΥΜΟΥΩΤ ΖΝ ΝΧΩΜΕ ΝΤΑΥΡ ΖΟΟΛΕ ΕΤΒΕ ΠΕΧΡΟΝΟC), for he was a servant of God. He then met a monk living in the Ennaton, who was from Scetis, and gave it to him. This is the way in which the life of those perfect saints of God was revealed. For the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God's peace. Amen.

The Bohairic version:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The translation is based on the text of the title published by Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 333.

<sup>9</sup> The translation is based on the text of the title published by Améli-



Maximus and Domitius, sons of  
who completed their good life  
all the commands of the holy  
14<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tobe, the  
me month. It was recounted by  
the deacon who lived in Scetis be-  
with Apa Isidorus who died a  
n was appointed in his place.  
memorialize them. He left it in  
wishing to live in accordance

Arabic version of the Life is fully  
titles", which are typical of the  
roduction.<sup>10</sup> The same type of  
y nucleus of the title (name of  
racter, subject of the work) by  
less important (place in which  
created or read, detailed infor-  
of its creation) is found in nu-  
are the *In Theodorum ducem* by  
um II by Constantine of Siout or  
uce both by Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>  
ne reasons already mentioned,  
ter, justifying a careful analysis  
previously listed. As well as the  
nsider two works which contain  
d characters quoted in them:  
Lives of Pshoi, of Zacharias, of

ate Coptic titles see P. Buzi, *Titles in  
structure Titles and Extended Complex  
International Congress of Coptic Studies,  
(coming)*.

Anastasius of Euchaita and the *In*  
L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Ma-  
euven* 1993, p. 303 and 244. For the  
a see E. A. W. Budge, *Miscellaneous*  
ndon 1915, p. 49. Finally for the *De*  
Campagnano, *Omellie copte sulla pas-*  
(), p. 76.

Moses, of Macarius, of Maximus and Domitius);

- The *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladius (in particular the chapter  
about Moses).

### 1. The length of the title

The unusual length already described, consisting in more than  
33 lines, makes this title the longest known to date in Coptic. It is  
contained in the f. 13r and in part of the f. 13v of the manuscript  
M584 of the Pierpont Morgan Library<sup>12</sup> and it is laid out on a single  
column, the extension of which (26,9 x 19,6 cm.) corresponds to the  
two columns in which the text of the work is organized.

Being preceded by a multicolour interlacing of flat ribs, on top  
of which is a cross, it is flanked on the left side by an undulate  
hemming adorned with a simple floral decoration flanked by a  
punctiform motif.

The handwriting, differently from that of the text itself, in which  
P, Y, 4 and sometimes T tend to be short, is inclined slightly to  
the right, and is characterized by a certain prolongation of the apices  
and, at the same time, by a thickening of their terminal parts. In  
general it is an attractive, rather elegant handwriting.

### 2. The "literary genre"

The terminology used to define the so-called "literary genre"  
represents an *unicum* in Coptic: the usual ΠΒΙΟC is preceded by the  
term ΖΥΠΘΘΕCIC which is not present in any other title. For this  
reason, identifying the exact semantic shade of that ΖΥΠΘΘΕCIC is  
very important for a full understanding of the title.<sup>13</sup>

In Greek the term has numerous meanings among which are  
"subject" and "beginning". The former meaning is used by Aris-  
totle,<sup>14</sup> although not in a title. In Quintilianus,<sup>15</sup> on the other hand,

<sup>12</sup> See L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts of the Pierpont Morgan  
Library II*, plates 156-157.

<sup>13</sup> For the various meanings of ΖΥΠΘΘΗCIC see H. G. Liddell - R. Scott, *A  
Greek English Lexicon*, Oxford 1968, pp. 1881-1882.

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, c. 1436a 36; *Rhetorica*, c. 1404b 15;  
*Poetica*, c. 1455a.

<sup>15</sup> Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria* 3,5,7.

it assumed the more specific value of "subject of a *logos*", as was to be used later in the *Progymnasmata* by the IV-V century rhetor Aphthonius.<sup>16</sup> But even more pertinent is the witness of Isocrates<sup>17</sup> who uses exactly the same expression "hypothesis of the life" as in the Sahidic title. A different shade of the same meaning is used by Eusebius in his first book of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* which is entitled "the summary (hypothesis) of the planned work".<sup>18</sup> In the same way the term "hypothesis" is used by Theodoretus in his *Interpretationes*<sup>19</sup> and in some late profane texts such as the "Hypothesis of the Iliad" preserved in a codex of the Bodleian Library.<sup>20</sup> Finally Photius in his *Lexicon* explains the meaning of περίοχη (argument, summary) with the terms ὑπόθεσις and περιτέτεια.<sup>21</sup>

As for the second meaning, that of "beginning", it appears in the IV century A.D. in the *De vita Pythagorica* of Iamblichus.<sup>22</sup>

The case of the Hamuli manuscript would seem especially similar to the use of the term made by Eusebius and Theodoretus and, consequently, it would convey in the "summary of the life of Maximus and Domitius". The term ΖΥΠΟΘΗCIC would not substantially change the meaning of ΒΙΟC but certainly it remains a case without parallels in Coptic.

<sup>16</sup> Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 13.

<sup>17</sup> Isocrates 4,63.

<sup>18</sup> See E. Grapin, in Eusèbe, *Histoire Ecclésiastique* I.1, Paris 1905, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> In *Theodoretus Cyrensis opera omnia*, PG 82 cc. 673-674 (Theodoretus, *Interpretatio Epistolae ad Hebraeos*); 787-788 (Theodoretus, *Interpretatio Epistolae I ad Timotheum*) and 831-832 (Theodoretus, *Interpretatio Epistolae II ad Timotheum*) "hypothesis" is translated as *argumentum*.

<sup>20</sup> Ms. Barocci 131 f. 42r. It contains a miscellany of Greek classical and Byzantine texts, some unique or rare, by Michael Psellus and many others, on paper, 3rd quarter of the 13th century. Cf. <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msbarocci131>.

<sup>21</sup> Photius, *Lexicon*, π, 420.3; υ, 627.20. The *Lexicon* was compiled, probably, to a great extent by his students under his direction, from older Greek dictionaries (Pausanias, Harpokration, Diogenianos, Ælius Dionysius). It was intended as a practical help to readers of the Greek classics, the Septuagint, and the New testament. It is contained in the defective "Codex Galleanus" (first part of the XIII cent.).

<sup>22</sup> Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 27,130. For more examples of the use of the term in the same meaning see again Liddell-Scott, *A Greek English Lexicon*, p. 1881.

### 3. The content of the work

After the terminology us title goes on to identify the tinus, emperor of the Roman virtues after having fulfilled Maximus, died on the 14<sup>th</sup> Domitius, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the s

The main feature of the more or less faithfully but ce work to which they are attrib the life of the two saints are that this first part of the title tributed to the *Life* and that added only much later. The rather than on the content of its author, on the type of g unusual, on the details of t transmitted.

### 4. The identification of the a

After the description of tions the author: "It was reco the first deacon who lived v Apa Isidorus. He died a dea pointed in his place".

<sup>23</sup> Illustrative in this regard of Jerusalem in Campagnano, died within the work are taken nostro santo padre apa Cirillo, lode della croce santa e lumine gnore disse a Mosè: "Celebriamo è apparsa sulla tomba del Salvatore. Egli pronunciò questo discorso: Signore Gesù Cristo, nel giorno della croce con tutto il popolo gloria alla santa croce. Nella pated titles, which are not at all tion, are nevertheless almost ab

"subject of a *logos*", as was to be the IV-V century rhetor Aphthonius, witness of Isocrates<sup>17</sup> who uses the "analysis of the life" as in the Sahidic version. The term *logos* meaning is used by Eusebius in his *Logos* which is entitled "the summary of the life".<sup>18</sup> In the same way the term *logos* is used in his *Interpretationes*<sup>19</sup> and in his *Hypothesis of the Iliad* preface.<sup>20</sup> Finally Photius in his *Bibliotheca* (argument, summary) with

the word "beginning", it appears in the *Logos* of Iamblichus.<sup>22</sup>

It would seem especially similar to the *Logos* of Theodoretus and, consequently, the summary of the life of Maximus would not substantially differ. It remains a case without

### 3. The content of the work

After the terminology used to describe the "literary genre", the title goes on to identify the two main characters as "sons of Valentinus, emperor of the Romans, who completed a good life full of all virtues after having fulfilled all the commands of the Gospels. One, Maximus, died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tobe, the other, Domitius, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the same month".

The main feature of the Coptic longer titles is to summarize, more or less faithfully but certainly not concisely, the content of the work to which they are attributed.<sup>23</sup> But in this case the references to the life of the two saints are limited to a few details. It is probable that this first part of the title is what remains of the one originally attributed to the *Life* and that all the following data would have been added only much later. The author of this version prefers to dwell, rather than on the content of the work, on the story of the text, on its author, on the type of graphic support used and, what is really unusual, on the details of the way in which this would have been transmitted.

### 4. The identification of the author

After the description of the content of the work, the title mentions the author: "It was recounted by Apa Pshoi of Constantinople, the first deacon who lived with Apa Makarios, a man of God, and Apa Isidorus. He died a deacon. Apa Moses the Ethiopian was appointed in his place".

<sup>23</sup> Illustrative in this regard is the title of the *De Cruce* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem in Campagnano, *Omélies Coptes*, p. 77 where all the subjects handled within the work are taken into consideration in detail: "Discorso del nostro santo padre apa Cirillo, arcivescovo di Gerusalemme, pronunciato in lode della croce santa e luminosa e circa le parole della Scrittura che il Signore disse a Mosè: "Celebrami una festa tre volte l'anno" e sulla croce che è apparsa sulla tomba del Salvatore e su Isacco il samaritano che egli battezzò. Egli pronunciò questo discorso nel luogo della resurrezione di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo, nel giorno 17 del mese di Touth, celebrando la festa della croce con tutto il popolo ortodosso e quasi tutta la città, rendendo gloria alla santa croce. Nella pace di Dio. Amen". Such long, fully articulated titles, which are not at all infrequent in the Coptic manuscripts tradition, are nevertheless almost absent in the "literary genre" of the *bios*.

*Religieuse* I.1, Paris 1905, p. 2.  
PG 82 cc. 673-674 (Theodoretus, *Interpretatio Epistolae* Theodoretus, *Interpretatio Epistolae II ad argumentum*).

a miscellany of Greek classical and Michael Psellus and many others, y. Cf. <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?cc131>.

The *Lexicon* was compiled, probably under his direction, from older Greek (Diogenianus, Aelius Dionysius). It lists the Greek classics, the Septuagint in the defective "Codex Ga-

1. For more examples of the use of Liddell-Scott, *A Greek English Lexi-*

In most cases, in the "literary genre" of the **ΒΙΟC** the author is missing. In fact titles of *passiones* and lives limit themselves to the mention of the main characters, without dwelling on who may have written them. This title is an exception, even if not an *unicum*,<sup>24</sup> also from this point of view.

The identification of Pshoi is a problem in its own right. The aforementioned Sahidic title states that "he died as a deacon. Apa Mose was appointed in his place", while according to the Bohairic version Pshoi was the "first deacon who lived in Scetis (ⲱⲓⲏⲧ in Coptic) with apa Macarius, a man of God, and Isidorus". We also learn that after his death, he was succeeded by apa Moses. As the latter is said to have fallen victim to the *Mazikoi* in 407,<sup>25</sup> Pshoi must have already been dead by then. In addition, this date also constitutes the *terminus ante quem* of the *Life of Maximus and Domitius*, if, of course, Pshoi is indeed its author.

The Arabic version of the Life of Phoi<sup>26</sup> does not harmonize fully with this account. According to it, he was the follower of a certain Amoi the Older at whose house he met John Kolobos, whose close friend he soon became. After Amoi's death, Pshoi and John decided to separate. While the latter established his dwelling in Scetis, Pshoi moved to the desert, to a cave which very soon attracted several other monks. This place, which the Arabic Life is at pains to describe as impenetrable and difficult to reach, was located a few kilometers from the future monastery of Abu Maqar and in a few years it would be transformed into the monastery of Anba Bishoi. In 407 the aforementioned attack by the *Mazikoi* caused the dispersion

<sup>24</sup> As far as I know there are only seven examples of titles of **ΒΙΟC** in which the author's name is mentioned. They are the *Vita Archellidis* by Eusebius of Rome (Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 317), the *Vita Samuelis archimandritae* by Isaak of Kalamun (Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 276), the *Vita Phif* by Papohe (T. Orlandi - A. Campagnano, *Vite dei monaci Phif e Longino*, Milano 1975, p. 20), the *Vita Macarii* by Sarapamon (Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères*, p. 46), the *Vita Iohannis Nani* by Zakharias (Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères*, p. 316), the *Vita Cyri* (E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London 1914, p. 128) and the *Vita Hilariae* by Pambus of Scetis (Depuydt, *Catalogue*, pp. 328-329).

<sup>25</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 19,1. See G. H. J. Bartenlink, *La Storia Lausiaca*, Firenze 1974, p. 96.

<sup>26</sup> See *Maximus and Domitius* in Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* V, New York 1991, p. 1576 and *Pshoi*, in *ibid.* VI, pp. 2029-2030.

of the monks of all the communities, so the *Life* states, was buried in the mountains of Antinoë.

Doubts about Pshoi's identity are maintained that it was hardly possible to imagine a rival in Scetis.<sup>28</sup> Amélineau's *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* v. Bashiah (= Pshoi) on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the origin from Shatsa (now known as Constantinople as the two Coptic Synaxaries adds that after he adopted a monastic life under Amoi) in whose house he performed several miracles worked by Pshoi. *quo autem tempore Berberi deserunt Bašiah et in monte Antinoes habuerunt persecutionis transacto, cum coenasset in monasterio sancti Abū Bašiah*.

This reference to the Bebaia is significant, as a similar account is found in the *Life*, thus underscoring the connection between Coptic literature and the devotion to Pshoi.

In conclusion, the sources:

1) the title of the Sahidic *Life* attributing to him authorship of the *Life* in Constantinople.

2) the title of the Bohairic *Life* attributing to the information given in the "first deacon who lived in Scetis".

<sup>27</sup> Concerning this aspect see Natrun II, pp. 404 ss.

<sup>28</sup> Concerning Pshoi see also *Ethiopian Church* IV, Cambridge 1969, *éthiopienne de l'histoire de Besoy*, in 169-184.

<sup>29</sup> J. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandriae*.

<sup>30</sup> Forget, *ibid.* p. 208.



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G. H. J. Bartenlink, *La Storia Lau-*

*The Coptic Encyclopedia* V, New York  
9-2030.

of the monks of all the communities of the Wadi al-Natrun.<sup>27</sup> Among  
them, so the *Life* states, was Pshoi, who, evidently still alive, took ref-  
uge in the mountains of Antinoupolis, returning to Scetis only to be  
buried.

Doubts about Pshoi's identity were already expressed by Amé-  
lineau who maintained that his name did not sound Greek and that  
it was hardly possible to imagine that he had changed it after his ar-  
rival in Scetis.<sup>28</sup> Amélineau's doubts seem to be confirmed by the  
*Synaxarium Alexandrinum* which commemorates the death of  
Bashiah (= Pshoi) on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month of Abib and mentions his  
origin from Shatsa (now known as Shansa), in Egypt, and not from  
Constantinople as the two Coptic titles would state.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore,  
the Synaxary adds that after a visit by an angel of God, Pshoi  
adopted a monastic life under the guidance of Anba Bamuyah (=  
Amoi) in whose house he met John Kolobos. A description of sev-  
eral miracles worked by Pshoi follows, concluded by the sentence:  
*quo autem tempore Berberi desertum Scetense invaserunt, locum mutavit Abū*  
*Bašiah et in monte Antinoes habitavit, ubi mortuus est. Eius corpus, tempore*  
*persecutionis transacto, cum corpore Anba Pauli, e Tamuah oriundi, in*  
*monasterium sancti Abū Bašiah attulerunt.*<sup>30</sup>

This reference to the Berbers as invaders of Scetis is extremely  
significant, as a similar account is included in the Sahidic version of  
the *Life*, thus underscoring the close link between the last phase of  
Coptic literature and the development of the Synaxary.

In conclusion, the sources mentioning Pshoi are the following:

1) the title of the Sahidic version of the *Life* which, as well as at-  
tributing to him authorship of the work, stresses his origin from  
Constantinople.

2) the title of the Bohairic version of the *Life* in which, in addi-  
tion to the information given by the preceding title, he is qualified  
as the "first deacon who lived in Scetis with apa Macarius".

<sup>27</sup> Concerning this aspect see Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n*  
*Natrun* II, pp. 404 ss.

<sup>28</sup> Concerning Pshoi see also E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of Saints of the*  
*Ethiopian Church* IV, Cambridge 1928, pp. 1083-1087, and P. Beylot, *La version*  
*éthiopienne de l'histoire de Besoy*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 203 (1986), pp.  
169-184.

<sup>29</sup> J. Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* II, Roma 1921, pp. 206-208.

<sup>30</sup> Forget, *ibid.* p. 208.

3) the Syriac version of the *Life of Maximus and Domitius* in which the author is mentioned. This version is known through ms. Brit. Mus. Add. 14655, ms. Brit. Mus. Add. 17262 and ms. Brit. Nus. Add. 14735 ff. 72-173 and was published by F. Nau, *Les légendes syriaques d'Aaron de Saroug, de Maxime et Domèce, d'Abraham, maître de Barsoma, et l'empereur Maurice*, in *Patrologia Orientalis* V, 750-766.

4) the Arabic version of the Life of Pshoi (the Coptic version of which is unknown), which summarizes his course of life and describes his spiritual growth and encounters with important persons, such as Amoi the Elder, John Kolobos, and Macarius, as well as Paul of Tamma.

5) the Arabic version *Life of Maximus and Domitius* translated by B. Pirone, *Vita dei Santi Massimo e Domezio nelle Fonti Arabe. Edizione, traduzione e note*, [Studia Orientalia Christiana. Collectanea 29-30], Cairo 1996-1997, pp. 348 and 370 in which the author, here anonymous, affirms: "tutto ciò che vi ho esposto me lo raccontò Massimo, il quale mi fece giurare su Dio e mi fece promettere che mai avrei palesato alcunché li riguardasse fino a che fossero rimasti in vita".

6) the summary of the Life of Pshoi in the *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* which substantially coincides with the Life known in Arabic but in addition enumerates the long series of miracles made by Bashah (= Pshoi), mentioning his Egyptian origins (from Shantsa) and the intimate relationship with the foundation of the monastery of Amba Bishoi.

It is not easy to establish the true identity of 'our' Pshoi but it is possible to advance some hypotheses:

1) Pshoi of Scetis and Pshoi of Constantinople are the same person: the author to whom the *Life* is attributed coincides with the individual commemorated in the Synaxary on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Abib. The Synaxary emphasizes above all the link between the Wadi al Natrun and Pshoi, on whom the foundation of the *monasterium sancti Abu Basiah* (now known as Deir el Baramus) is thought to depend in consequence of the relocation of his remains there.<sup>31</sup> The confusion about his origin (Scetis or Constantinople) might be justified by the fact that the author of the title have only scanty memories of those facts.

<sup>31</sup> It is important to remember that the figure of John Kolobos is also related to the foundation of one of the monasteries in the Wadi al Natrun which took its name from him. This monastery, certainly fully active at the end of the IV century, probably disappeared during the VI century.

2) Pshoi of Scetis and Pshoi of Constantinople are two different persons, being the second the more credible. The credibility of Pshoi of Constantinople is helped by the homonymy with the Scetis Pshoi.

In both these cases Pshoi is a venerated personality. But it is not clear that Pshoi of Constantinople has any information about him has been.

It is easier to identify Moses the Black, who was killed in a full description of his life. He was maybe even murderer, this man with dark skin, became "tardivus" and went to Scetis, where he led the conversion of other monks.

Moses's life is interwoven with the demons who tried to hinder him from reaching the perfect asceticism. And when his body was buried in the Monastery of Deir al-Baramus, he was buried before Paphnuce's body was removed from the 'desert' in 399, because it defended the Festal Letters of the white controversy of that year "with apa Macarius" can not be brought the Life of Maximus.

The fourth figure mentioned is Macarius the Great,<sup>37</sup> who was born in Alexandria. Born around 300

<sup>32</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*

<sup>33</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*

<sup>36</sup> See J-C. Guy, *Les Apophtegmes, introduction, texte critique, traduction et*

<sup>37</sup> Macarius the Great is also known as "Macarius of Scetis".



*Maximus and Domitius* in which  
 on is known through ms. Brit.  
 17262 and ms. Brit. Nus. Add.  
 by F. Nau, *Les legends syriaques*  
*e, d'Abraham, maître de Barsoma,*  
*italis V, 750-766.*

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2) Pshoi of Scetis and Pshoi of Constantinople are not the same person, being the second invented to give authority to the work. The credibility of Pshoi of Constantinople as author of the *Life* is helped by the homonymy with the real Pshoi.

In both these cases Pshoi of Constantinople would be an invented personality. But it is also possible, although not probable, that Pshoi of Constantinople really existed and that any other information about him has been lost.

It is easier to identify Moses the Ethiopian, known also as Moses the Black, who was killed in 407 by the *Mastikoi*. Palladius<sup>32</sup> gives a full description of his life. After having been a thief, bandit and maybe even murderer, this man of Ethiopian origins and with a very dark skin, become "tardivamente toccato dal pentimento"<sup>33</sup> and went to Scetis, where he led an extremely hard life and facilitated the conversion of other miscreants by serving as an example.

Mose's life is interwoven with that of Isidorus when he was visited by the demons who tried to bring him back to his "antica consuetudine di sfrenata lussuria".<sup>34</sup> And it was Isidorus himself who helped him to reach the perfect *ascesis* and the "carisma contro i demoni"<sup>35</sup>. And when his body was buried and venerated in the church of the Monastery of Deir al-Baramus, Isidorus acted as "le pretre en exercise avant que Paphnuce n'occupe ce poste et après que Macaire se fut retiré dans le 'désert interieur'".<sup>36</sup> The latter must have "disappeared" by 399, because it was his successor Paphnutius who defended the Festal Letters of Theophilus during the anthropomorphic controversy of that year. Consequently this Isidorus, who lived "with apa Macarius" can not be identical with the Isidorus who brought the Life of Maximus and Domitius to Alexandria.

The fourth figure mentioned in this portion of the title is that of Macarius the Great,<sup>37</sup> who was a contemporary of his namesake from Alexandria. Born around 300 in the village of Jiber, in the south-

<sup>32</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 19,1. See Bartenlink, *La Storia Lausiaca*, p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 19,1. See Bartenlink, *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 19,11. See Bartenlink, *ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>36</sup> See J-C. Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des pères. Collection systématiques I-X. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, Sch 387, Paris 1993, p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> Macarius the Great is also known as "Macarius the Egyptian" or "Macarius of Scetis".

western part of the Nile delta, he moved to the Wadi al Natrun around 330 to live in a cave subdivided into two areas, one of which served as oratory. It is there that Maximus and Domitius joined him. His encounter with the main characters of the *Life* therefore occurred before Macarius founded the complex community of Scetis.<sup>38</sup>

At this point, the title gives a series of very detailed descriptions concerning the transmission of the *Life*, which we have no reason to consider unfounded.

"Pshoi wrote the life of the saints on a papyrus scroll. He left it in the church as a benefit and a memorial, for all readers, of a beautiful way of life in accordance with God and with virtue, for he met with them for some days while they were still alive when he came to Scetis".

According to the title, Pshoi wrote the *Life of Maximus and Domitius* on a scroll of papyrus, deposited in the church of Scetis. Although the author of the title does not provide further indications, it is possible to formulate a hypothesis to determine which church the title refers to.

The toponym "Scetis" or "desert of Scetis" is used, in a strict sense, to define the area south of Kellia which extends down the long valley known in the Middle Ages as Wadi Habib and now as Wadi al Natrun. Sometimes, however, the same term is used to identify all the communities in the northern area of the Libyan desert, including Kellia and Nitria, the last of which is in fact very often confused with the Wadi al Natrun.<sup>39</sup> But even if we take the strict

<sup>38</sup> The life of Macarius of Scetis is recounted by Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 204, according to which he was relegated to an island in the Nile delta with Macarius of Alexandria during the Arian persecutions (around 374) and went back to Scetis only a few months before his death (around 390). Concerning this see also A. J. Festugière, *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto. Édition critique du texte grec*, [Subsidia Hagiographica 34], Bruxelles 1961, pp. 123-128.

<sup>39</sup> See *Scetis* in A. S. Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* VII, pp. 2102-2106. During the Middle Ages the most interesting references to Scetis are made by al-Maqrizi in his *Kitab*. Concerning this see H. G. Evelyn-White, *The monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun. The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis II*, New York 1932, pp. 404-405: "The Valley of Habib is situated in the western part of Egypt, between Maryût and the Fayyûm. It takes its name from Habib ibn Mohammed of the tribe of Fezareh, one of the companions of

sense of the toponym, we find the IV century, and more of four communities in Scetis situation. Although they were not had a definite structure: a which hinged on the church later were to be transformed (Deir Abu Maqar), that of the Romans (Deir Baramus) are destined to disappear. At the time there were at least four churches in

It is known that each section has its own "father of the monastery" only the "father of the monastery" because he was the "father of Scetis" because he was in Wadi al Natrun before the others of the imperial government most distant and least accessible therefore a pre-eminent role of Shenoute I, when he built the Maqar, was instrumental in the foundation and still in 1088, when the a

the Prophet [...] This valley is the Natrûn, Desert of Shihet, Formerly there were to be four churches there are now remain only one greatly fallen forth from their foundations the Christian writers, there can be found with a staff in his hand, who was with him on his return from Alexandria and monasteries [...] The most famous is Macarius the Great". Further details in *de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, Paris 1961.

<sup>40</sup> Evelyn-White, *The monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun*.

<sup>41</sup> P. van Cauwenbergh, *Étude sur les monastères Chalcédoine (451) jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*.

<sup>42</sup> The authorship of the *History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis* is traditionally attributed to the hagiographer Den Heijer proposed the theory of its origin in the editing of the *History*.

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ezareh, one of the companions of

sense of the toponym, we must consider the fact that, already from  
the IV century, and more exactly from Macarius' death, there were  
four communities in Scetis characterized by a semi-anchorite dispo-  
sition. Although they were not yet considered real monasteries, they  
had a definite structure: a group of cells, the central nucleus of  
which hinged on the church.<sup>40</sup> These communities are those which  
later were to be transformed into the monasteries of St. Macarius  
(Deir Abu Maqar), that of St. Bishoi (Deir Anba Bishoi), that of the  
Romans (Deir Baramus) and that of John Kolobos, the last being  
destined to disappear. At the end of the IV century, therefore, there  
were at least four churches in Scetis.

It is known that each section of the community of Scetis had its  
own "father of the monastery" who was assisted by a council. But  
only the "father of the monastery" of Deir Abu Maqar was also called  
"father of Scetis" because he represented all the communities of the  
Wadi al Natrun before the bishop of Alexandria and the administra-  
tors of the imperial government.<sup>41</sup> The monastery of Abu Maqar, the  
most distant and least accessible of any in the entire valley, had  
therefore a pre-eminent role in comparison with the others. In 870  
Shenoute I, when he built the high enclosure wall around Deir Abu  
Maqar, was instrumental in attracting a great number of new monks  
and still in 1088, when the author of the *History of the Patriarchs*<sup>42</sup> vis-

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the Prophet [...] This valley is also called the Valley of the Kings, Valley of  
the Natrûn, Desert of Shihet, Desert of Askit, Balance of the hearts. [...] Formerly there were to be counted in this valley a hundred monasteries. Of these there are now remain only seven [...] Today these monasteries are greatly fallen forth from their former splendor. Indeed if we are to believe the Christian writers, there came from them seventy thousand monks, each with a staff in his hand, who went to Terraneh to salute 'Amr ibn el 'As on his return from Alexandria and to beg his protection for them and for their monasteries [...] The most famous of these monasteries is that of Saint Macarius the Great". Further details are provided by Amélineau, *La Géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, Paris 1893, pp. 433-452.

<sup>40</sup> Evelyn-White, *The monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun* II, pp. 95-124.

<sup>41</sup> P. van Cauwenbergh, *Étude sur les moines d'Égypte depuis le Concile de Chalcédoine (451) jusqu'à l'invasion arabe (640)*, Paris 1914, pp. 81-88.

<sup>42</sup> The authorship of the *History of the Patriarchs* is still a problem. Traditionally it is attributed to the historiographer Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa, but J. den Heijer proposed the theory of the decisive hand of Mawhub ibn Mansur in the editing of the *History of the Patriarchs*. For an in-depth study of the

ited the place, four hundred of the 712 monks who lived in the Wadi al-Natrun still inhabited that monastery. Therefore the "church of Scetis" mentioned in the title might be the church of the monastery of Saint Macarius.

On the other hand it is also very credible that the church in question, where Pshoi would have left the scroll containing his work, was that which was built near the tomb of the two saints and which is clearly mentioned in the Arabic version of the *Life of Maximus and Domitius*.<sup>43</sup>

Unfortunately the continuing use of the monasteries of Scetis caused the disappearance not only of their original features but also of the single structures of which they were composed and, along with these, of the details of how and where the manuscripts were collocated. Nevertheless the fact that the title specifically mentions the church leads us to believe that the library might have been collocated in a room close to the ecclesiastical structure, as was the case of the other monasteries, for example that of Shenoute (the so-called "White Monastery" at Atriipe) where, in a room north of the apse of the main church, inscriptions have been found on the walls describing the titles of the works preserved there, sometimes followed by the number of the existing copies.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of these

question see J. den Heijer, *L'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie, recension primitive et vulgate*, in *Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte* 27 (1985), pp. 1-29 and Mawhub ibn Mansur ibn Mufarrig et l'historiographie copto-arabe. *Études sur la composition de l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*, CSCO 513 Subsidia 83, Louvain 1989. Also useful Mawhub ibn Mansur ibn Mufarrig al Iskandarani in Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* V, pp. 1573-1574.

<sup>43</sup> See for this aspect R-G. Coquin, *Le livre de la consecration du santuaire de Benjamin*, [Bibliothèques d'études coptes 13], Le Caire 1975, pp. 101-102 and above all B. Pirone, *Vita dei Santi Massimo e Domezio nelle Fonti Arabe. Edizione, traduzione e note*, [Studia Orientalia Christiana. Collectanea 29-30], Cairo 1996-1997, p. 385. The Arabic version of the *Life* does not only mention the presence of a church near the tomb of the two saints, but also the fact that it was on the responsibility of the presbyter Isidorus giving therefore more credibility to the information provided with the Sahidic title: "Un anno dopo la loro morte furono molti ad abitare in questo deserto [...] Edificarono presso la grotta di questi due santi una grande chiesa cui fu preposto un presbitero a nome Isidoro, un santo padre invero, mentre io, pur spregevole, venni eletto diacono".

<sup>44</sup> T. Orlandi, *The Library of the Monastery of Shenute at Atriipe*, in *Conference*

inscriptions it has been possible to see that the scroll contained the New Testament, while those of the Old Testament were on the eastern wall, while the homiletic texts were on the eastern and western walls respectively. This is in principle. We can assume that the scroll was also organized in the same way.

The specification of the scroll as *ΝΧΑΡΤΗC*, a scroll of papyrus, is interesting. In the session are instead on *codices*, but the value of "codex",<sup>45</sup> but it does not include this meaning, mentioning "papyrus", "book" and "divine". *ΝΧΑΡΤΗC* is concerned how "papyrus".<sup>46</sup>

The scribe then goes on to mention the tiny of the manuscript, to assume the Mastikoi, Apa Eisdoros Xenon. He spoke about the zeal for them".

At this point the figure of Isidorus is to have died as a deacon and an Ethiopian. To Isidorus is not the Xenon of Alexandria.

and Perspectives on Panopolis, Leiden 1997.

<sup>45</sup> L. Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 3. The scroll was used for copying of literary works entirely by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, for centuries earlier".

<sup>46</sup> G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic*

<sup>47</sup> Liddell-Scott, *A Greek English*

<sup>48</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*

<sup>49</sup> The "Xenon" which the *Xenodochium*) *apud Alexandriam* and the sick with which the cost was provided. The building, as a Christian community at a later date. of the city of Alexandria see *Atti geografici e topografici dell'Egitto* asylums for pilgrims in Alexandria

monks who lived in the Wadi  
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tical structure, as was the case  
le that of Shenoute (the so-  
here, in a room north of the  
have been found on the walls  
eserved there, sometimes fol-  
copies.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of these

atriarches d'Alexandrie, recension pri-  
rchéologie copte 27 (1985), pp. 1-29  
storigraphie copto-arabe. Études sur la  
lexandrie, CSCO 513 Subsidia 83,  
nsur ibn Mufarrij al Iskandarani in  
14.

vre de la consecration du sanctuaire de  
3], Le Caire 1975, pp. 101-102 and  
Domezio nelle Fonti Arabe. Edizione,  
stiana. Collactanea 29-30], Cairo  
e *Life* does not only mention the  
e two saints, but also the fact that  
er Isidorus giving therefore more  
th the Sahidic title: "Un anno do-  
questo deserto [...] Edificarono  
grande chiesa cui fu preposto un  
e invero, mentre io, pur spregevo-

ry of Shenute at Atripe, in *Conference*

inscriptions it has been possible to deduce that the volumes which  
contained the New Testament were on the shelves of the northern  
wall, those of the Old Testament on the shelves of the southern  
wall, while the homiletic texts and the biographies were on the east-  
ern and western walls respectively, following a systematic collocation  
principle. We can assume that the library of the church of Scetis was  
also organized in the same way.

The specification of the material used is surprising: ΕΥΔΟΜΟC  
ΝΧΑΡΤΗC, a scroll of papyrus. Both versions of the *Life* in our pos-  
session are instead on *codices* of parchment. Depuydt gives ΔΟΜΟC  
the value of "codex",<sup>45</sup> but neither Lampe<sup>46</sup> nor Liddell-Scott<sup>47</sup> in-  
clude this meaning, mentioning instead those of "roll", "section of  
papyrus", "book" and "division of a work". As far as the term  
ΧΑΡΤΗC is concerned however there are no doubts at all: it is  
"papyrus".<sup>48</sup>

The scribe then goes on in his meticulous description of the des-  
tiny of the manuscript, to assert: "When Scetis has been laid waste by  
the Mastikoi, Apa Eisdoros took it with him to Alexandria to the  
Xenon. He spoke about the life of those saints and about his great  
zeal for them".

At this point the figure of Isidorus reappears. He was already said  
to have died as a deacon and to have been replaced by Moses the  
Ethiopian. To Isidorus is now attributed the transfer of the *Life* to  
the Xenon of Alexandria.<sup>49</sup> The alphabetic version of the

and *Perspectives on Panopolis*, Leiden 1998 (forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> L. Depuydt, *Catalogue*, p. 333. Concerning this he says: "probably a co-  
dex. For copying of literary works, the codex had replaced the roll almost  
entirely by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, for those of Christian content even two or three  
centuries earlier".

<sup>46</sup> G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961, p. 1396.

<sup>47</sup> Liddell-Scott, *A Greek English Lexicon*, p. 1804.

<sup>48</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, p. 1519.

<sup>49</sup> The "Xenon" which the title refers to is probably the *Xenon* (or  
*Xenodochium*) *apud Alexandriam* was one of the many asylums for pilgrims  
and the sick with which the cosmopolitan and crowded town of Alexandria  
was provided. The building, as in several other cases, was utilized by a Chri-  
stian community at a later date. For its topographic collocation in the fabric  
of the city of Alexandria see *Alessandria* in A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi  
geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano* I, Milano 1935, p. 138. For other  
asylums for pilgrims in Alexandria see C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*,



*Apophthegmata Patrum* dedicates two chapters<sup>50</sup> to an Isidorus of Scetis, who lived in the IV century and was known for his exceptional patience. Even if he is not mentioned in his own right in the *Synaxarium*, he is included, in the same work, under the life of Zacharias of Scetis, commemorated on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Babah,<sup>51</sup> and above all under that of Moses the Ethiopian who, as we have already seen in Palladius, lived in Scetis at the same time as Isidorus, who acted as his adviser. Moses is commemorated in the *Synaxarium* on the 24 of Bawunah about whom we read *audiens aliquem affirmantem esse in valle Habib monachos qui Deum cognoscerent, surrexit et, ense succinctus, desertum petiit, occurritque sancto Isidoro presbytero, qui eius aspectu territus est.*<sup>52</sup> In spite of his initial alarm, it was to be Isidorus himself who would lead Moses to Macarius and support him when, after he retreated to the desert, he was repeatedly tempted by the devil. With Isidorus therefore, we have another reference to the spiritual and cultural life of Scetis and to the people who lived there.

As far as the *Mazikoi* are concerned, it is known that Scetis had been attacked three times in the V century alone: in 407, in 434 and in 444. Finally in the VI century there was another assault, probably the fiercest, as a consequence resulted the monastery of Saint Macarius was abandoned for many years.

The scroll containing the *Life* "remained there until the time of Apa Khael, the most holy archbishop of Alexandria. It was brought to light by a deacon named Eustatios, who had found it in a large storage box of old parchment books written in quires, when he was looking for books that might have deteriorated over time, for he was a servant of God. He then met a monk living in the Ennaton, who was from Scetis, and gave it to him. This is the way in which the life of those perfect saints of God was revealed. For the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God's peace. Amen".

The reference to the finding of the manuscript, in more or less miraculous circumstances, is not unusual in the Coptic literary production. Among the homiletic works we can enumerate at least six works in which similar circumstances occur:

*Topography and Social Conflict*, Baltimore 1997, p. 367 and 393.

<sup>50</sup> J.C. Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des pères du désert. Série alphabétique*, [Textes de spiritualité orientale 1], Bègrolles s.d., pp. 134-136.

<sup>51</sup> Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* I, pp. 66-68.

<sup>52</sup> Forget, *ibid.*, pp. 183-185.

- Basil of Caesarea: *De ecclesiastica* find an account of a letter from John, also known as Mark, concerning the first church dedicated to him.

- John Chrysostom: *In Iohannem* author, who was still a priest, finds the whose library he finds a reference to the Apostles to the other world.

- John Chrysostom: *In quatuordecim prophetas* character is again the author of the mother of John, and there is a mention made by Jesus Christ to the apostles which transported God's power.

- Theodosius of Alexandria: *De virginibus* in which there is a reference to Jerusalem about Mary's Assumption in Alexandria.

- Timothy of Alexandria: *De scriptura* account of a parchment written by the Evangelist, and found in his library. John's testimony on his journey.

- Timothy of Alexandria: *De scriptura* thy goes to Jerusalem, invite him. In his mission he asks to examine the manuscripts which themselves might have left in the library to copy the manuscript.

In each of these six homilies the *Life* has an important role in the title. In the only case where we also find the title in the title. In the case of the *Life* account how and where the manuscript was found in the title.

Going back to the historical context, we can suppose that the manuscript was probably Kha'il I (or Mikha'il I).

<sup>53</sup> Numbers in brackets refer to the *Life*.

<sup>54</sup> For the complete text of the *Life* *tyrdoms*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>55</sup> See Kha'il in Atiya, *The Coptic Church*.

chapters<sup>50</sup> to an Isidorus of and was known for his exceptioned in his own right in the same work, under the life of on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Babah,<sup>51</sup> and opian who, as we have already e same time as Isidorus, who norated in the *Synaxarium* on ad *audiens aliquem affirmantem n cognoscerent, surrexit et, ense ncto Isidoro presbytero, qui eius al alarm, it was to be Isidorus rius and support him when, af-peatedly tempted by the devil. her reference to the spiritual ople who lived there. d, it is known that Scetis had ntury alone: in 407, in 434 and was another assault, probably lted the monastery of Saint rs. ained there until the time of of Alexandria. It was brought , who had found it in a large ritten in quires, when he was riorated over time, for he was nk living in the Ennaton, who his is the way in which the life eveled. For the glory of our en". ie manuscript, in more or less sual in the Coptic literary pro- we can enumerate at least six occur:*

- Basil of Caesarea: *De ecclesia Mariae Virginis* (0073)<sup>53</sup> in which we find an account of a letter found in the house of Mary, mother of John, also known as Mark, containing the story of the foundation of the first church dedicated to the Virgin at Philippi.

- John Chrysostom: *In Iohannem Baptistam* (0170) in which the author, who was still a priest, makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in the whose library he finds a manuscript concerning the visit of the Apostles to the other world.

- John Chrysostom: *In quattuor animalia* (0177) in which the main character is again the author, who goes to the house of Mary, the mother of John, and there finds a manuscript containing a revelation made by Jesus Christ to the Apostles, concerning the four animals which transported God's throne.

- Theodosius of Alexandria: *De Assumptione Mariae Virginis* (0385) in which there is a reference to a book containing ancient stories of Jerusalem about Mary's Assumption, found in the library of St. Mark in Alexandria.

- Timothy of Alexandria: *In Michaelem* (0404) in which we find the account of a parchment written by Proclus, disciple of John the Evangelist, and found in his own house. The parchment contained John's testimony on his journey to the other world.

- Timothy of Alexandria: *Institutio Abbaton* (0405) in which Timothy goes to Jerusalem, invited by John the presbyter whose permission he asks to examine the Book of Abbaton, which the Apostles themselves might have left in the library. Timothy expresses a desire to copy the manuscript.

In each of these six homilies the finding of a manuscript clearly has an important role in the narrative, but the *Institutio Abbaton* is the only case where we also find a clear reference to this episode<sup>54</sup> in the title. In the case of the "Life of Maximus and Domitius" the account how and where the manuscript was found is contained only in the title.

Going back to the historical references of this portion of the text, we can suppose that the Apa Khael mentioned in the title is probably Kha'il I (or Mikha'il)<sup>55</sup> (744-767) who was a presbyter at

<sup>53</sup> Numbers in brackets refer to the *clavis coptica*.

<sup>54</sup> For the complete text of the title and the work see Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>55</sup> See Kha'il in Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* V, pp. 1410-1412.

97, p. 367 and 393.  
désert. *Série alphabétique*, [Textes de  
134-136.

, pp. 66-68.





us's death, was appointed the bishops asked the governor of Alexandria to make it as a garrison town for the emperor. It became the first Islamic capital of Egypt. As Kha'il I is to be preferred to the first would fit perfectly the tradition of Scetis to which, it is now known, the author of the work,

Maximus and Domitius", there is no evidence until the middle of the VII century, it was discovered by chance in the library of the deacon Eustatius' responsible for selecting the text and had to be restored, since it was the servant of God", who found our among a quantity of other books  
 56 ΕΞΕΝΤΕΤΡΑC ΝΧΩΩΜΕ

of the "Life of Maximus and Domitius" and that of the Sahidic version, nothing significant to it. The titles depend on an original Coptic tradition of the titles which contained the indication of the main characters but not the

transformation of the original

transformed, over time, into a "model" independently and more or less substantially in agreement with the Sahidic (consisting of the medium

model with further information) probably derived.

- the original brief title was transformed, over the ages, into a "model" of medium length from which the Bohairic title would have been directly derived. From the model of medium length, the Sahidic one was created at a later date, adding the information (concerning the tradition of the text and the life in the Scetis' milieu) which the author considered useful and effective.

- the long Sahidic title may have been derived from the "model" of medium length, being abbreviated, at a later date, by the creator of the Bohairic one.

Although it is difficult to outline precisely the evolution of the title, the last hypothesis seems to be the least probable. If the Bohairic title depended on the Sahidic one, the author of the former would have cut out the specific information related to the tradition of the text contained in the Sahidic title. This would be reasonable only if the author of the Bohairic title were not part of the Scetis' milieu and wanted to eliminate all references to it. But this is not the case, since in the Bohairic title the most significant characters of that society (Macarius, Isidorus, Moses the Ethiopian) are present and the church in which Pshoi probably left the manuscript is mentioned.

Of the two other hypotheses, the second seems the most plausible. We can imagine the creation of a Sahidic title of medium length attributed to a work composed in the same language. Later this title may have been translated, together with the work it was attributed to of course, into Bohairic as well. At an even later date, around the VIII century, the Sahidic title was enriched with further data.

These hypotheses do not exclude of course the possibility that originally the *Life* had been composed in Greek (maybe in Alexandria, to which the Sahidic title refers) and only at a later date it was translated into Coptic and at this regard the scribe of the Arabic version of the *Life* published by Pirone clearly affirms that it was translated from Greek into Arabic. But this does not have anything to do with the evolution of the titles which in Coptic depend only in part on the works to which they are attributed and can be considered an "independent creation".

#### 6. Relationship between the content of the title and the content of the work

As we have already pointed out, in Coptic the longest titles generally contain a summary of the work to which they belong. These summary-titles represent, in some way, the ideas that the people who composed them had about those works and about the Coptic literature in general. In this case, given the scant mention of the two saints, it is necessary to read the whole work in order to know their story.

We discover then that Maximus and Domitius are the sons of Valentinianus (Valentinus in the Coptic text), in his turn son of Jovianus (363-364). They ask permission, which they obtain, to go to Nicaea to worship at the site where the holy council had been held. In Nicaea they meet the monk John of Nitria to whom they express their desire to dedicate themselves to the monastic life. John sends them to Agabus, in Syria, but after a few months he dreams of Macarius's asking him to send the two princes to Scetis. Nevertheless Maximus and Domitius continue to live in Syria until Agabus's death, in the meantime working miracles in various places (Askalon, Lystra, Gabala, Seleucia and even Athens) and weaving sails to make a living. And that is exactly how the emperor finds them: by reading their name embroidered on the sail of a merchant from Alexandria.

At this point the Sahidic version mentions the Egyptian origins of Theodosius the Great (379-395), who was chosen by Valentinus/Valentinianus before dying, so that "an Arian not sit on our father's throne". The generals Sergius and Athanasius have the responsibility of making sure of his succession in the face of his rival, "a friend of Julian" (the Apostate).

After this digression, the source of which is unknown, the narration of the life of Maximus and Domitius starts again. After the death of the bishop of Constantinople, Theodosius decides to appoint Maximus as his successor. The two brothers, with the help of an angel, then escape to Scetis and finally become part of Macarius's community.

The Bohairic version of the work is, as far the content is concerned, substantially equivalent to the Sahidic one, although less accurate in its details. The setting of Scetis, already in the hagiographic text, is itself an important protagonist that emerges from the complex narrative of the vicissitudes of Maximus and Domitius.

After the death of the two brothers, the nucleus of what was to be the monastery, consecrated to the memory of the two saints, was founded in Scetis.

We notice that all the churches mentioned, with the sole exception of Isis, are situated in the vicinity of a monastery which depends on the monastery of Scetis.

- Deir Abu Maqar from Maqar
- Deir Anba Musa from Maqar
- Deir el Baramus from Maqar
- Deir Anba Bishoi from Maqar

the Pshoi of the synaxarial version, and not the supposed author of the work.

But what is even more significant is that the language he uses, Sahidic, which is the language of the author of the middle length text, identifies him as a man of southern Egypt. This hypothesis concerning the real origin of the author of Scetis, evidently still very active in Egypt.

#### 7. The "Life of Maximus and Domitius"

The "Life of Maximus and Domitius" is a translation from the *Synaxarium*, but also contains the translation, more or less literal, of the original. Nevertheless it is the comparison of the two versions that provides the main interest.

<sup>57</sup> In particular the *Life* is translated in the *Synaxarium* ff. 530 ff. 300r-351r dated 1233 and 1234. For a complete list of the translations see Massimo e Domezio nelle *Fonti Arabe, christlichen arabischen Literatur* I, [1] pp. 536-537 above all concerning the examination (Kairo 723 ff. 72r-35v). Cf. also the *Life* of Maximus and Domitius see *Ethiopian Church* II, Cambridge 19

the title and the content of the work

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cles of Maximus and Domitius.

After the death of the two brothers, their bodies are transferred to the nucleus of what was to be Deir el Baramus, the monastery of the Romans, consecrated to the memory of the two saints of Roman origin.

We notice that all the characters of the Sahidic title of the *Life*, with the sole exception of Isidorus, are connected with the foundation of a monastery which derives its name from theirs:

- Deir Abu Maqar from Macarius
- Deir Anba Musa from Moses the Ethiopian
- Deir el Baramus from Maximus and Domitius
- Deir Anba Bishoi from Pshoi (although in this case it is rather the Pshoi of the synaxarial version to be related to the monastery and not the supposed author of the *Life*).

But what is even more significant is that the author of the title is not part of that society that is described in such details. The language he uses, Sahidic, which is presumably the same used by the author of the middle length title from which this surely comes, qualifies him as a man of southern Egyptian origin, suggesting interesting hypotheses concerning the relationship between the community of Scetis, evidently still very active in the VIII century, and southern Egypt.

#### 7. The "Life of Maximus and Domitius" in the Synaxarium

The "Life of Maximus and Domitius" is known in Arabic not only from the *Synaxarium*, but also from some manuscripts which contained the translation, more or less faithful, of the Coptic work.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless it is the comparison with the synaxarial summary that provides the main interest.

<sup>57</sup> In particular the *Life* is transmitted in Arabic through the mss. Sin Ar. 530 ff. 300r-351r dated 1233 and Sin. Ar. 475 ff. 222v-276v dated to the XIII century. For a complete list of the manuscripts see B. Pirone, *Vita dei Santi Massimo e Domezio nelle Fonti Arabe*, pp. 259-260. See also G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* I, [Studi e Testi 118], Città del Vaticano 1954, pp. 536-537 above all concerning the manuscript which Pirone could not examine (Kairo 723 ff. 72r-35v). Concerning the Ethiopian version of the *Life* of Maximus and Domitius see E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of Saints of the Ethiopian Church* II, Cambridge 1928, pp. 508-513.

The *Synaxarium* on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Tobe<sup>58</sup> mentions only briefly Maximus's death and for a memorial of the life of both it refers us to the 17<sup>th</sup> of the same month, the day in which Domitius<sup>59</sup> died. The description of the life of the two saints is extremely detailed and represents one of the longest of the whole synaxarial collection. Among the few omissions by comparison with the Coptic versions is that of the monk whom Maximus and Domitius met in Nicaea and who encouraged them to go to Syria (John, in the two Coptic texts), but the rest of the narration is extremely faithful to the Coptic version.

The section dedicated to the sojourn of the two princes in Scetis is particularly accurate. Their relationship with Macarius is also well described. At the beginning he is very skeptical about their ability to undergo the asceticism in the desert, but on the other hand he was very impressed when he saw them fighting against the demons which besieged them in the form of wolves. So the author of the synaxarial text follows the Coptic tradition, especially the Sahidic one.

It remains to be explained why the author of the title attributed to the Sahidic version of the "Life of Maximus and Domitius" decided to give such an unusual slant to it.

We suppose that the author of the title wanted to celebrate the community of the Wadi al Natrun more than the life of the two princes. Macarius, Moses, Pshoi, John Kolobos and above all Isidorus, to whom the survival of the *Life* is attributed, are some of the figures around which a sort of celebration of Scetis has been built. Also the patriarch (Mi)kha'il and, last but not least, the church of the monastery of Abu Maqar, the invasion of the *Mastikoi* and the foundation of the monasteries of Anba Bishoi, of John Kolobos and of the Romans took part in this glorification.

The main purpose is clearly to stress the prosperity of Scetis, not only at the time of (Mi)kha'il I (second half of the VIII century) but also later, up to the period of the creation of the Sahidic title, which in this way turns out to be the result of a creative activity in its own right.

Recent excavations in the area of the modern monastery of the Romans (Deir el Baramus) confirm the survival of a large community, at least until the period in which the title under examination

was created. The excavation, by the University of Leiden, is connected with the building of Moses the Black, which is of the Romans.<sup>61</sup>

The results of the first century as the probable date of the monastery as the moment in which it was founded. The historian Taqi al-Din (1364-1442) a small group of remains of the monastery.

The last monastic settlement of the two martyrs who, although they had been later identified with Macarius, the name of the monastery was changed.

Actually the information is not enough to prove that in the VIII century it was still an active centre of literary activity. It demonstrates that the monastery was a community of the area.

The text of the title attributed to the "Life of Maximus and Domitius",

<sup>60</sup> K. Innemée, *Excavations at Deir el Baramus*, vol. 1 and 2 (1998), pp. 15-18.

<sup>61</sup> Nowadays the name of Deir el Baramus, still in use, built next to the real D, a "twin monastery" of the real D.

<sup>62</sup> For a profile of al-Maqrizi see pp. 177-178. The historian and the works, of two contributions of a geographical study, both in four volumes.

<sup>63</sup> The main attention of the living area, characterized by a garrison wall made of limestone, but other monasteries of the same area, a defensive structure which is connected with the invasion in the western desert. No other building has been identified, which was surely used at least until the XVIII century, as demonstrated by the numerous numismatics.

<sup>58</sup> Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum* I, p. 344.

<sup>59</sup> Forget, *ibid.*, pp. 353-356.

Tobe<sup>58</sup> mentions only briefly of the life of both it refers us to n which Domitius<sup>59</sup> died. The is extremely detailed and rep- e synaxarial collection. Among the Coptic versions is that of ius met in Nicaea and who en- the two Coptic texts), but the ul to the Coptic version.

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was created. The excavation, which began in 1995 and is organized by the University of Leiden under the direction of Karel Innemée,<sup>60</sup> is connected with the building known nowadays as the monastery of Moses the Black, which is instead the real and original monastery of the Romans.<sup>61</sup>

The results of the first archaeological research suggest the IV century as the probable date for the foundation and the XV century as the moment in which the structure was definitely abandoned. The historian Taqiy al-Din al-Maqrizi<sup>62</sup> confirms that in his time (1364-1442) a small group of monks still lived in the crumbling remains of the monastery.

The last monastic settlement is related to the commemoration of the two martyrs who, although anonymous at the beginning, have been later identified with Maximus and Domitius from whom the name of the monastery was derived.<sup>63</sup>

Actually the information obtained from the excavations is not enough to prove that in the IX-XI centuries the Wadi al Natrun was still an active centre of literary production, but certainly it demonstrates that the monastery of St. Macarius was not the only vital community of the area.

The text of the title attributed to the Sahidic version of the "Life of Maximus and Domitius", with its meticulous description of credi-

<sup>60</sup> K. Innemée, *Excavations at Deir el Baramus*, in *Grafma Newsletter* 1 (1997) and 2 (1998), pp. 15-18.

<sup>61</sup> Nowadays the name of Deir el Baramus is used to designate the monastery, still in use, built next to the excavation site and which was founded as a "twin monastery" of the real Deir al Baramus during the VI century.

<sup>62</sup> For a profile of al-Maqrizi see *Encyclopédie de l'Islam* VI, Leiden 1991, pp. 177-178. The historian and topographer is the author, among the other works, of two contributions of great value: a universal history and a topographical study, both in four volumes.

<sup>63</sup> The main attention of the University of Leiden has been paid to the living area, characterized by a group of cells protected by a defensive enclosure wall made of limestone, built probably around the IX-X century. The other monasteries of the same area are also characterized by the addition of a defensive structure which is certainly to be connected with the barbarian invasion in the western desert. Not too far from the area of the cells a square building has been identified, the function of which is yet not clear, but which was surely used at least until the XII century, as it has been demonstrated by the numerous numismatic findings.

ble historical events, may witness to a real and lively cultural life in the Wadi al Natrun during the late Coptic age, although the title under examination cannot have been produced in Scetis, but rather for Scetis.

Concerning the accuracy of the information provided by the author of the title about the way in which the text would have been transmitted (and there are not plausible reasons to exclude it) it is still necessary to understand how he came by this knowledge. The most probable hypothesis is that he had revised a series of annotations contained in the manuscript (or rather, manuscripts) from which he obtained information to create his own version of the title of the *Life*. This information, perhaps concentrated in the colophon, would have been the cue for that celebration of Scetis which, as we have seen, is the real protagonist, for much of the title.

Paola Buzi

R.  
Athanasius von Alexandria  
setzung und Kommentar von Uta  
Walter De Gruyter, Berlin - New

In un articolo pubblicato in ha proposto un'ipotesi nuova e ne che c'informa sulla questione documentazione ci è stata tram *Decr.* 26 egli adduce *ad litteram* la accusa Dionigi di Alessandria pe contro i sabelliani, aveva avuto e vano trinitariamente troppo divi dendo l'Alessandrino dall'accusa quella di Ario, ancora Atanasio dello scritto apologetico con cui dal Romano. L'Abramowski ha i be stata il prodotto di un'impegi concilio di Serdica, più o meno promesso e mediazione tra nicei falso sarebbe stato introdotto ὁμοούσιος. Successivamente anco sta complessa falsificazione e se dall'accusa di essere stato un ari tutte le parti ed è stata male acco volume di Uta Heil ne prende l cisazione, nel contesto di un an desco e a un'ampia illustrazione

Il volume si apre con una brev *Sent.*, sulla traccia dei noti lavori c sione sulla datazione di *Sent.*, per 359/60, contro la tendenza gener scritto alcuni anni prima, 355/6 l'autrice ricorda brevemente la c fatto all'ipotesi della Abramowski sfruttato quella ipotesi a benefici respinge (pp. 36-43). Segue a qu